

HOUSING STANDARDS

MINOR ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR GREATER LONDON CONSOLIDATED WITH ALTERATIONS SINCE 2011

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MAYOR OF LONDON

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HOUSING QUALITY AND DESIGN POLICY

POLICY 3.5 QUALITY AND DESIGN OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Strategic

- A Housing developments should be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context and to the wider environment, taking account of strategic policies in this Plan to protect and enhance London's residential environment and attractiveness as a place to live. Boroughs may in their LDFs introduce a presumption against development on back gardens or other private residential gardens where this can be locally justified.

Planning decisions and LDF preparation

- B The design of all new housing developments should enhance the quality of local places, taking into account physical context; local character; density; tenure and land use mix; and relationships with, and provision of, public, communal and open spaces, taking particular account of the needs of children, disabled and older people.
- C LDFs should incorporate requirements for accessibility and adaptability¹, minimum space standards² including those set out in Table 3.3, and water efficiency.³ The Mayor will, and boroughs should, seek to ensure that new development reflects these standards. The design of all new dwellings should also take account of factors relating to 'arrival' at the building and the 'home as a place of retreat'. New homes should have adequately sized rooms and convenient and efficient room layouts which are functional and fit for purpose, meet the changing

needs of Londoners over their lifetimes, address climate change adaptation and mitigation and social inclusion objectives and should be conceived and developed through an effective design process⁴.

- D Development proposals which compromise the delivery of elements of this policy may be permitted if they are demonstrably of exemplary design and contribute to achievement of other objectives of this Plan.
- E The Mayor will provide guidance on implementation of this policy that is relevant to all tenures.

- 3.32 Securing new housing of the highest quality and protecting and enhancing residential neighbourhoods are key Mayoral priorities. The number of new homes needed to 2036 will create new challenges for private developers and affordable homes providers, but also brings unique opportunities for new housing which will be remembered as attractive, spacious, safe and green and which help to shape sustainable neighbourhoods with distinct and positive identities.

- 3.32A Since 2011 the London Plan has provided the basis for a range of housing standards that address the housing needs of Londoners and these are brought together in the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The options and process recently provided by Government aim to improve the quality of housing nationally⁵ and provide an opportunity to reinforce the status of the standards already in place for London. They have been consolidated and tested to ensure that they are sound in terms of need and viability.

¹ Requirements M4 (2) and M4 (3) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010. HM Government 2015.

² Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard. DCLG 2015

³ London Plan Policy 5.15

⁴ Mayor of London, Interim Draft Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance 2015

⁵ New national technical standards, Eric Pickles written statement to Parliament 25 March 2015: "Steps the government is taking to streamline the planning system, protect the environment, support economic growth and assist locally-led decision-making."

3.33 New housing development should address the wider concerns of this Plan to protect and enhance the environment of London as a whole. New development, including that on garden land and that associated with basement extensions, should avoid having an adverse impact on sites of European importance for nature conservation either directly or indirectly, including through increased recreation pressure on these sites. New development should also take account of the Plan's more general design principles (policies 7.2 to 7.12) and those on neighbourhoods (Policy 7.1), housing choice (Policy 3.8), sustainable design and construction (Policy 5.3), as well as those on climate change (Chapter 5), play provision (Policy 3.6), biodiversity (Policy 7.19), and flood risk (Policy 5.12).

3.35 The quality of individual homes and their neighbourhoods is the product of detailed and local design requirements but the implementation of these across London has led to too many housing schemes in London being of variable quality. The cumulative effect of poor quality homes, and the citywide benefits improved standards bring, means this is a strategic issue and properly a concern of the London Plan. Addressing these issues is an important element of achieving the Mayor's vision and detailed objectives for London and its neighbourhoods set out in Chapter One.

3.36 The Mayor regards the relative size of all new homes in London to be a key element of this strategic issue and therefore has adopted the Nationally Described Space Standard⁶. Table 3.3 sets out minimum space standards for dwellings of different sizes. This is based on the minimum gross internal floor area (GIA) required for new homes relative to the number of

occupants and taking into account commonly required furniture and the spaces needed for different activities and moving around. This means developers should state the number of bedspaces/occupiers a home is designed to accommodate rather than, say, simply the number of bedrooms. These are minimum standards which developers are encouraged to exceed. When designing homes with more than eight persons/bedspaces, developers should allow approximately 10 sq m per extra bedspace/person. Single person dwellings of less than 37 square metres may be permitted if the development proposal is demonstrated to be of exemplary design and contributes to achievement of other objectives and policies of this Plan.

⁶ Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard. DCLG 2015

Table 3.3 Minimum space standards for new dwellings⁷

Number of bedrooms	Number of bed spaces	Minimum GIA (m ²)			Built-in storage (m ²)
		1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	
1b	1p	39 (37)*			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0

Notes to Table 3 3

1. * Where a one person dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m², as shown bracketed.
2. The Gross Internal Area of a dwelling is defined as the total floor space measured between the internal faces of perimeter walls¹ that enclose a dwelling. This includes partitions, structural elements, cupboards, ducts, flights of stairs and voids above stairs. GIA should be measured and denoted in square metres (m²).
3. The nationally described space standard sets a minimum ceiling height of 2.3 meters for at least 75% of the gross internal area of the dwelling. To address the unique heat island effect of London and the distinct density and flatted nature of most of its residential development, a minimum ceiling height of 2.5m for at least 75% of the gross internal area is strongly encouraged so that new housing is of adequate quality, especially in terms of light, ventilation and sense of space.

⁷ new dwellings in this context includes new build, conversions and change of use

3.37 Other aspects of housing design are also important to improving the attractiveness of new homes as well as being central to the Mayor's wider objectives to improve the quality of Londoners' environment. To address these he has produced guidance on the implementation of Policy 3.5 for all housing tenures in his Housing SPG, drawing on his design guide for affordable housing⁸.

3.38 At the neighbourhood level this SPG addresses the relationship between strategic density Policy (3.4) and different local approaches to its implementation; the spaces between and around buildings; urban layout; enclosure; ensuring homes are laid out to form a coherent pattern of streets and blocks; public, communal and private open spaces; and the ways these relate to each other and neighbourhoods as a whole. It will respond to the needs of an ageing population by including the principles for inclusive design and those to develop and extend Lifetime Neighbourhoods set out in Policies 7.1 and 7.2.

3.39 For individual dwellings the SPG covers issues such as 'arrival' – including the importance of creating active frontages, accommodating footpaths and entrances and shared circulation spaces; size and layout including room space standards as well as the dwelling space standards set out in Table 3.3; the home as a 'place of retreat' (especially important in higher density development); meeting the challenges of a changing climate by ensuring homes are suitable for warmer summers and wetter winters, and mitigating the extent of future change; and ensuring easy adaptation to meet the changing and diverse needs of occupiers over their lifetimes. The importance of an effective design process to make sure

that the quality of schemes is not compromised as the development proceeds will also be highlighted. This guidance provides a strategic, functional basis for a new vernacular in London's domestic architecture which also places greater weight on complementing and enhancing local context and character.

⁸ Mayor of London. London Housing Design Guide (LHDG) 2010

HOUSING CHOICE POLICY

POLICY 3.8 HOUSING CHOICE

Strategic

- A Londoners should have a genuine choice of homes that they can afford and which meet their requirements for different sizes and types of dwellings in the highest quality environments.

LDF preparation and planning decisions

- B To inform local application of Policy 3.3 on housing supply and taking account of housing requirements identified at regional, sub-regional and local levels, boroughs should work with the Mayor and local communities to identify the range of needs likely to arise within their areas and ensure that:
- a new developments offer a range of housing choices, in terms of the mix of housing sizes and types, taking account of the housing requirements of different groups and the changing roles of different sectors in meeting these
 - a1 the planning system provides positive and practical support to sustain the contribution of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in addressing housing needs and increasing housing delivery.
 - b provision of affordable family housing is addressed as a strategic priority in LDF policies
 - c ninety percent of new housing⁹ meets Building Regulation requirement M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'

- d ten per cent of new housing¹⁰ meets Building Regulation requirement M4 (3) 'wheelchair user dwellings', i.e. is designed to be wheelchair accessible, or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users
- e account is taken of the changing age structure of London's population and, in particular, the varied needs of older Londoners, including for supported and affordable provision
- f account is taken of the needs of particular communities with large families
- g other supported housing needs are identified authoritatively and co-ordinated action is taken to address them in LDF and other relevant plans and strategies
- h strategic and local requirements for student housing meeting a demonstrable need are addressed by working closely with stakeholders in higher and further education and without compromising capacity for conventional homes.
- i the accommodation requirements of gypsies and travellers (including travelling show people) are identified and addressed, with sites identified in line with national policy, in coordination with neighbouring boroughs and districts as appropriate.
- j appropriate provision is made for the accommodation of service families and custom build, having regard to local need.

- 3.48 Many already households in London require accessible or adapted housing in order to lead dignified and independent lives: 28,000 are attempting to move to somewhere more suitable to cope with a disability and more than 267,000 need a home adaption¹¹. More Londoners are

⁹ Unlike the other standards in this Plan, Part M of the Building Regulations generally does not apply to dwellings resulting from a conversion or a change of use. Additional guidance on the applicable requirements of the Building Regulations (amended 2015) can be found in: Approved Document M Access to and use of buildings Volume 1: Dwellings.

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ GLA. Analysis of English Housing Survey 2008/09–2011/12

living longer and more older people are choosing to remain in their own homes rather than go into residential institutions. To address these and future needs, 90 per cent of London's new build housing¹² should be built to Building Regulation requirement 'M4 (2): Accessible and adaptable dwellings'¹³ and the remaining 10 per cent of new build housing¹⁴ should be built to Building Regulation requirement 'M4 (3): Wheelchair user dwellings'¹⁵. LDF policy departures from these requirements must be justified by authoritative evidence from local needs assessments.

- 3.48A As set out in Approved Document M of the Building Regulations - Volume 1: Dwellings, to comply with requirement M4 (2), step free access must be provided. Generally this will require a lift where a dwelling is accessed above or below the entrance storey. The application of requirement M4 (2) has particular implications for blocks of four storeys or less, where historically the London Plan has not required lifts. Boroughs should seek to ensure that dwellings accessed above or below the entrance storey in buildings of four storeys or less have step-free access. However, for these types of buildings this requirement may be subject to development-specific viability assessments and consideration should be given to the implication of ongoing maintenance costs on the affordability of service charges for residents. Where such

assessments demonstrate that the inclusion of a lift would make the scheme unviable or mean that service charges are not affordable for intended residents, the units above or below the ground floor that cannot provide step free access would only need to satisfy the requirements of M4(1) of the Building Regulations. All other standards should be applied as set out in this Plan. Further guidance is provided in the Draft Interim Housing SPG.

- 3.49 Boroughs should undertake assessments of the short and longer term supported housing needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, taking account of the wide range of requirements which will arise as London's population ages, the importance of continuity of care, and access to family and friendship networks as well as statutory responsibilities for care.
- 3.49A The requirement for 'wheelchair user dwellings' applies to all tenures. However part M4 (3) of the Building Regulations regarding 'wheelchair user dwellings' distinguishes between 'wheelchair accessible' (a home readily useable by a wheelchair user at the point of completion) and 'wheelchair adaptable' (a home that can be easily adapted to meet the needs of a household including wheelchair users). The Planning Practice Guidance¹⁶ states that Local Plan policies for wheelchair accessible homes should only be applied to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling. Boroughs should therefore specifically assess the level of need for wheelchair accessible dwellings and identify this in their LDF policies.

¹² Unlike the other standards in this Plan, Part M of the Building Regulations generally does not apply to dwellings resulting from a conversion or a change of use

¹³ Requirement M4 (2) Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010. HM Government 2015.

¹⁴ Unlike the other standards in this Plan, Part M of the Building Regulations generally does not apply to dwellings resulting from a conversion or a change of use

¹⁵ Requirement M4 (3) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010. HM Government 2015.

¹⁶ The Planning Practice Guidance (Housing- Optional Technical Standards) Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 56-009-20150327 DCLG Revision date: 27 03 2015

3.50 The Mayor has identified the growing and changing requirements for housing older people in London as one of the most important emerging planning issues for London. It is anticipated that between 2011 and 2036 'over 65s' could increase by 64% and 'over 90s' could grow in number by 89,000.

3.50A Most older Londoners are likely to prefer to remain in their own homes, and some will require support to enable them to do so. It is important that new development expands this choice for existing and future generations of older Londoners. Policy 3.5 on housing quality and its associated housing standards¹⁷ will play a key role in extending choice by ensuring 90 percent of new dwellings are 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' and ensuring that 10% are wheelchair user dwellings¹⁸. More generally, London's changing urban environment must respond positively to the needs of an ageing population, including through the principles for inclusive design and those to develop and extend Lifetime Neighbourhoods set out in Policies 7.1 and 7.2.

¹⁷ Mayor of London. Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance. GLA, 2012

¹⁸ Requirement M4 (3) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010. HM Government 2015

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION POLICY

- 5.27 In support of the London Housing Strategy the Mayor has produced a *Housing Design Guide*¹⁹ (see Chapter 3), which provides further guidance on the standards outlined in the Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance.

¹⁹ Mayor of London. London Housing Design Guide. (LHDG). LDA, 2010.

WATER USE AND SUPPLIES POLICY

POLICY 5.15 WATER USE AND SUPPLIES

Strategic

- A The Mayor will work in partnership with appropriate agencies within London and adjoining regional and local planning authorities to protect and conserve water supplies and resources in order to secure London's needs in a sustainable manner by:
- a minimising use of mains water
 - b reaching cost-effective minimum leakage levels
 - c in conjunction with demand side measures, promoting the provision of additional sustainable water resources in a timely and efficient manner, reducing the water supply deficit and achieving security of supply in London
 - d minimising the amount of energy consumed in water supply
 - e promoting the use of rainwater harvesting and using dual potable and grey water recycling systems, where they are energy and cost-effective
 - f maintaining and upgrading water supply infrastructure
 - g ensuring the water supplied will not give rise to likely significant adverse effects to the environment particularly designated sites of European importance for nature conservation.

Planning decisions

- B Development should minimise the use of mains water by:
- a incorporating water saving measures and equipment
 - b designing residential development so that mains water consumption would meet a target of 105 litres or less per head per day²⁰

- C New development for sustainable water supply infrastructure, which has been selected within water companies' Water Resource Management Plans, will be supported

- 5.60 Water supplies are essential to any sustainable city and to the health and welfare of its people. London's consumption of water already outstrips available supplies in dry years and ensuring a sustainable and secure water supply has to be an urgent priority. Some steps have already been taken. Investment in recent years to reduce leakage from Victorian mains supply pipes has had an effect (although Thames Water still has a significantly higher leakage rate than the rest of the country). An additional source of supply, the desalination plant at Beckton, has been operational since 2010. These two measures have eased the pressure on water resources in London.
- 5.61 But the fundamental problem remains. To remain sustainable, London needs to reduce the level of water consumption per person. Currently the average Londoner consumes 164 litres/day (l/d)²¹, around 20 l/d above the national average. Projections for population growth in London and in the wider south-east will mean that over the period of this Plan, new strategic water resources will be required. The need for this is exacerbated by the climate change predictions of more sporadic and intense rainfall and a higher likelihood of droughts as well as the need to protect the water environment implementing the Thames River Basin Management Plan requirements. Thames Water, which provides over three-quarters of Londoners with water, projects a significant (around 6 % by 2020) capacity

²⁰ Excluding an allowance of 5 litres or less per head per day for external water consumption.

²¹ Environment Agency. State of the Environment Report, February 2013

deficit. To ensure London's future water security, the prudent use of water will be essential: all new development will need to be water efficient. Residential development should be designed so that mains water consumption would meet a target of 105 litres or less per head per day, excluding an allowance of 5 litres or less per head per day for external water use. This reflects the 'optional requirement' set out in Part G of the Building Regulations²². As all water companies that serve London are located in areas classified as seriously water stressed²³, the 'optional requirement' should be applied across London. A fittings-based approach should be used to determine the water consumption of a development²⁴. This approach is transparent and compatible with developers' procurement and the emerging Water Label, which Government and the water companies serving London are supporting.

potential capacity shortfalls of the wider network serving their area. Further detail relating to London's water and wastewater infrastructure is contained in the Mayor's Water Strategy.

- 5.61A Existing homes and workplaces will have to become more water efficient, particularly through metering and water efficiency retrofits. Retrofitting water efficiency measures in existing buildings provides scope for considerable water savings (see Policy 5.4). A rolling programme for the replacement of London's water mains will reduce wastage and London's water companies will have to invest in sustainable sources of water. Cooperation will be needed across boundaries to identify and address

²² Requirement G2 of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010. HM Government 2015.

²³ Serious water stress is defined as where current or future household demand for water is – or is likely to be – a high proportion of the effective rainfall to meet that demand. – Environment Agency, Water stressed areas – final classification, July 2013.

²⁴ Table 2.2 of Part G of the Building Regulations provides maximum consumption values for water fittings. If these consumption values are exceeded and where waste disposal units, water softeners or water re-use are specified in the application, the Water Efficiency Calculator must be completed.

LIFETIME NEIGHBOURHOODS POLICY

- 7.5 Against the background of a rising number of both younger and older Londoners over the Plan period, increasing the opportunities everyone has to access and participate in their communities will help all Londoners to enjoy and feel secure in their neighbourhoods.²⁵ Ensuring that families with small children, older people and disabled people can easily move around enables everyone to participate in, and contribute to, the life of the community. Lifetime neighbourhoods,²⁶ where access to public transport, basic amenities, local shops, cultural facilities, places to meet and relax, and green and open spaces are within easy reach of homes, and where facilities such as public toilets and seating are consciously planned into proposals at the outset, help to build cohesive, successful and sustainable communities, and achieve social sustainability²⁷.

²⁵ Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), *Inclusion by Design Equality, Diversity and the Built Environment*, November 2008

²⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), *Lifetime Homes Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society*, February 2008

²⁷ DCLG NPPF 2012, para 7 op cit.

GLOSSARY DEFINITIONS

Allowable Solutions

Allowable Solutions are part of the Government's strategy for the delivery of zero carbon homes from 2016. Through the mechanism of Allowable Solutions, carbon emissions which cannot be cost-effectively reduced on-site can, once a minimum on-site carbon performance standard has been reached, be tackled through off-site measures.

Wheelchair accessible

This refers to homes built to Building Regulation Requirement M4 (3) (2) (b): Wheelchair user dwellings, where the dwelling is constructed to meet the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs.

Wheelchair adaptable

This refers to homes built to Building Regulation Requirement M4 (3) (2) (a): Wheelchair user dwellings, where the dwelling is constructed to allow simple adaptation to the dwelling to meet the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs.